



December 17, 2021

# 2021-2022 Application Guidance to Create a Founding Group-State Board Model Charter School

Guidance for Charter Schools Wishing to Open in  
School Year 2022-2023

## Introduction

This application guidance provides independent founding groups<sup>1</sup> with information about, and instructions for, submitting an application to the Iowa State Board of Education (State Board) to create a Founding Group-State Board model charter school within the boundaries of the state that operates as a new attendance center (i.e., school building) independently from a school district.

## Background

In May 2021, Governor Reynolds signed two bills into law that affect the development and operations of new charter schools in Iowa. [House File \(HF\) 813](#) establishes, and [HF 847](#) amends, procedures for new charter schools—or those authorized by the State Board on or after July 1, 2021, to open no earlier than the following school year—under Iowa Code chapter 256E. In addition, in November 2021, the State Board adopted new and amended charter school rules under [Iowa Administrative Code chapter 19](#) to reflect the legislative changes. These rules (effective January 19, 2022) are reflected in the application requirements.

## Purposes of Charter Schools

Charter schools are a part of the state's public education program. Iowa Code outlines the following purposes of charter schools:

- Improve student learning, well-being, and postsecondary success.
- Increase learning opportunities for students in areas of need, including but not limited to science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), and science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM).
- Increase opportunities for work-based learning, early literacy intervention, and serving at-risk populations.
- Accelerating student learning to prevent learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic and other significant disruptions to student learning.
- Encourage the use of evidence-based practices in innovative environments.
- Require the measurement and evaluation of program implementation and learning outcomes.
- Establish models of success for Iowa schools.
- Create new professional opportunities for teachers and other educators.
- Investigate and establish different organizational structures for schools to use to implement a multi-tiered system of supports for students.

<sup>1</sup> "Founding group" means a person, group of persons, or education service provider [or "an education management organization, charter school management organization, or other person with whom a charter school contracts for educational program implementation or comprehensive management"] that develops and submits an application for a charter school to the state board under this chapter" (Iowa Code § 256E.2(4)-(5), as amended by the 2021 Iowa Acts, HF 813).

- Allow greater flexibility to meet the educational needs of a diverse student population and changing workforce needs.
- Allow for the flexible allocation of resources through the implementation of specialized school budgets for the benefit of the schools served.
- Allow greater flexibility for districts and schools to focus on closing gaps in student opportunity and achievement for all students from preschool through postsecondary preparation (Iowa Code § 256E.1(3), as amended by the 2021 Iowa Acts, HF 813).<sup>2</sup>

## Technical Assistance Available by Request

It is strongly encouraged that applicants contact the Iowa Department of Education (Department) to receive technical assistance before completing the application. If the independent founding group wishes to utilize technical assistance, it must contact Janet Boyd at [janet.boyd@iowa.gov](mailto:janet.boyd@iowa.gov) or 515-745-3385 before application submission. Once an application is submitted, it is considered final, and no additional changes will be accepted.

## Application Requirements

For an application to be reviewed, the independent founding group must complete and submit one of the approved application forms (see the following Forms section) by the established application deadline:

- For a charter school proposed to open in the 2022-2023 school year, the independent founding group must submit its charter school application by February 1, 2022, by 11:59 pm (Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—19.6(5)).
- For a charter school proposed to open in the 2023-2024 school year (or later), the independent founding group must submit its charter school application by November 1, 2022 (or November 1 of the preceding school year) by 11:59 pm (Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—19.6(5)).

The independent founding group's application must:

- Demonstrate its academic and operational vision and plans for the proposed charter school,
- Demonstrate its capacity to execute the vision and plans, and
- Provide the State Board a clear basis for assessing its plans and capacity (Iowa Code § 256E.5(1), as amended).

## Forms

The independent founding group must submit an electronic [Charter School Application Form: Founding Group-State Board Model](#)—which expedites the review and, if necessary, can be saved to the applicant's Google account and completed over several sessions—or its [paper version](#) to the Department for review. If wishing to submit a paper version of the form, the independent founding group must submit the completed application form, and its attachments, via email to [ruth.jones@iowa.gov](mailto:ruth.jones@iowa.gov) or by mail to:

Iowa Department of Education  
Attention: Ruth Jones  
400 East 14th Street  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0146

## Application Review Procedures

Review requirements for the Department (on behalf of the State Board) include:

- Thoroughly evaluating the application using review procedures, practices, and criteria consistent with nationally recognized principles and standards;
- Conducting an in-person interview with the independent founding group; and

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise written, from this point forward, “as amended” should be taken to mean “as amended by the 2021 Iowa Acts, HF 813.”

*Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.*

- Providing, in a public forum, an opportunity for local residents to learn about and provide input on the proposed charter school's application (Iowa Code § 256E.5(5), as amended).

## DEPARTMENT EVALUATION

At least three Department staff will review the application and provide a recommendation to the State Board regarding whether to approve (with or without conditions) or deny the establishment of the charter school. For the evaluation portion of the review, evaluators will rate each question against the minimum application criteria (see the following Application Content and Criteria section). Each response will be assigned a point value between zero and three points (see Table 1) based on the level of competence demonstrated (i.e., the level at which the question's minimum criteria are met).

*Table 1. Question Response Point Assignments.*

Point(s)	Competency Level
0	Response <u>does not demonstrate competence</u> required in the question.
1	Response <u>demonstrates minimal or moderate competence</u> required in the question.
2	Response <u>demonstrates full or exemplary competence</u> required in the question.

## RECOMMENDATION TO THE STATE BOARD

For the application to be recommended for approval, each question response must receive a summed score (i.e., the sum of all evaluators' scores) of at least one. An application with a summed score of zero on any question will not be recommended for approval because it does not meet the minimum criterion (or criteria) required to open and operate a successful charter school.

## STATE BOARD APPROVAL OR DENIAL

Based on the recommendation of the Department, the State Board must:

- Approve a charter school application only if the applicant has demonstrated competence in each element of the State Board's published approval criteria and is likely to open and operate a successful charter school;
- Make application decisions on documented evidence collected through the application review process; and
- Adhere to the policies and criteria that are transparent, based on merit, and avoid conflicts of interest or any appearance thereof (Iowa Code § 256E.5(6), as amended).

The decision to approve or deny the establishment and operation of a charter school must be within 75 calendar days after the application is received. An approval decision may include, if appropriate, reasonable conditions that the independent founding group must meet before a charter school contract may be executed pursuant to Iowa Code section 256E.6 (Iowa Code § 256E.5(8), as amended).

### Approval

If an application is approved, the State Board must execute a charter school contract with the independent founding group within 30 days after State Board action (Iowa Code § 256E.6(1), as amended). If the application is approved with conditions, the independent founding group must meet all conditions imposed on their application before a charter school contract is executed.

### Denial

If an application is denied, the State Board must notify the founding group, in writing, of application denial within 30 days after the State Board's action. The notice must specify the exact reasons for the denial and provide documentation supporting those reasons. The decision of the State Board is final and not appealable, but an unsuccessful applicant may reapply to the State Board (Iowa Code §§ 256E.5(8)-(10), as amended; Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—19.6(4)).

## Application Timeline and Decisions

Table 2. Application Timeline and Decisions.

Date (Citation)	Description
<b>February 1, 2022, by 11:59 pm</b> (Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—19.6(5))*	<p>Deadline for an independent founding group to submit a charter school application for a charter school proposed to open in the 2022-2023 school year.</p> <p><i>*Application deadline beginning fall 2023:</i> For an independent founding group wishing to open a charter school in fall 2023 (or later), this application deadline will be November 1, 2022 (or November 1 of the preceding school year) by 11:59 pm.</p>
<b>During application review</b> (Iowa Code § 256E.5(5), as amended)	<p>Review requirements for the Department (on behalf of the State Board) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thoroughly evaluating the application using review procedures, practices, and criteria consistent with nationally recognized principles and standards (see the following Application Content and Criteria section);</li> <li>• Conducting an in-person interview with the independent founding group; and</li> <li>• Providing, in a public forum, an opportunity for local residents to learn about and provide input on the proposed charter school's application.</li> </ul>
<b>75 days after the application is received</b> (Iowa Code § 256E.5(8), as amended)	<p>Deadline for the State Board to approve (with or without “reasonable conditions”) or deny the independent founding group's application.</p>
<b>Within 30 days after State Board action OR upon meeting conditions if the application is conditionally approved</b> (Iowa Code §§ 256E.5(8)-(10) & 256E.6(1), as amended; Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—19.6(4) & 281—19.9)	<p><u>Approval</u> – Deadline for a charter school contract (see the following Charter School Contract Performance Framework section regarding the performance provisions of the contract) to be executed between the independent founding group and State Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If an application is approved with conditions, the independent founding group must meet all conditions imposed on their application before a charter school contract is executed between the independent founding group and State Board.</li> </ul> <p><u>Denial</u> – Deadline for the State Board to notify, in writing, the independent founding group of application denial. The notice must specify the exact reasons for denial and provide documentation supporting those reasons.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The decision of the State Board is final and not appealable, but an unsuccessful applicant may subsequently reapply to the State Board.</li> </ul>

## Charter School Contract Performance Framework

The charter school contract must include performance provisions that clearly set forth the academic and operational performance indicators, measures, and metrics that will guide the State Board's evaluation of the charter school, without compromising individual student privacy. Iowa Administrative Code subrule 19.10(1) requires the performance framework to include:

- Student academic growth and proficiency in English language arts on statewide outcome assessments.
- Student academic growth and proficiency in mathematics on statewide outcome assessments.

- c. Achievement gaps in both proficiency and growth on statewide outcome assessments between specified populations or groups of students, including groups based on gender, race, poverty, special education status, limited English proficiency, and gifted status.
- d. Benchmark status on early literacy approved screening measure(s) in grades kindergarten through three.
- e. Attendance.
- f. Conditions for learning data (as required by Iowa's state plan under the Every Student Succeeds Act).
- g. Enrollment attrition and mobility.
- h. Postsecondary readiness for students in grades nine through 12.
- i. Goals specified in the charter school's mission.
- j. Financial performance and sustainability.
- k. Governing board performance and stewardship, including compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and terms of the charter contract.

## Application Content and Criteria

*Please note that all information submitted in the charter school application is public information.*

Provide the contact's name, email address, and phone number for this application.

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
[5]a. An executive summary.	1. Executive Summary 1.1. Provide an executive summary of the proposed charter school (Limited to 9,000 characters).	1.1 should briefly summarize the proposed charter school's ability to meet the purposes outlined in Iowa Code section 256E.1, subsection 3, as amended (see the previous Purposes of Charter Schools section).
b. The mission and vision of the proposed charter school, including identification of the targeted student population and the community the school intends to serve.	2. Proposed Vision and Mission 2.1. Describe the vision of the proposed charter school (Limited to 1,500 characters). 2.2. Describe the mission for the proposed charter school and identify the targeted student population(s) and community(ies) the proposed charter school intends to serve (Limited to 1,500 characters).	2.1 should describe the overall purpose and intention of the proposed charter school.  2.2 should describe the current objectives of the charter school, including the targeted student population(s) and community(ies) to be served.
c. The location of the proposed charter school or the proposed geographic area within the state where the school is proposed to be located.	3. Proposed Location 3.1. What is the street address of the proposed charter school? Or, if not yet identified, describe the proposed geographic area within the state where the charter school is proposed to be located (Limited to 500 characters).	

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
<p>d. Identification of the grades to be served each school year during the duration of the charter school contract.</p> <p>e. Minimum, planned, and maximum enrollment per grade for each school year during the duration of the charter school contract.</p>	<p>4. Proposed Grade Levels and Enrollment</p> <p>4.1. Select each grade level that would be served during the five-year duration of the charter school contract (Check all that apply). [Kindergarten to 12th grade checkboxes]</p> <p>4.2. Download, complete, and upload the <a href="#">4.2 enrollment table template</a>—to indicate the minimum, planned, and maximum enrollment for each year of the charter school contract—for each grade level selected in 4.1. [Upload]</p>	
<p>f. Evidence of need and community support for the proposed charter school.</p>	<p>5. Evidence of Need and Community Support</p> <p>5.1. Describe the evidence of need for the proposed charter school (Limited to 3,000 characters; supplemental information can be uploaded in 5.3).</p> <p>5.2. Describe the evidence of community support for the proposed charter school (Limited to 3,000 characters; supplemental information can be uploaded in 5.3).</p> <p>5.3. Optional upload to support 5.1 and 5.2.</p>	<p>5.1 and 5.2 should address how the independent founding group gathered, engaged, and assessed the community's support for the proposed school. Evidence may include survey results, minutes from community meetings, summarized public comments, or any other documentation of community need and support for the proposed charter school.</p>
<p>g. Background information on the members of the founding group and background information on the governing board, administration, and management personnel of</p>	<p>6. Independent Founding Group and Governing Board Background Information</p> <p>6.1. Enter the names of the independent founding group members (Limited to 500 characters).</p> <p>6.2. Upload the curriculum vitae (CV) or résumé for each founding member. [Upload]</p>	<p>6.1 to 6.4: Iowa Code section 256E.2, subsections 5 and 6, as amended, define the following terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<i>Founding group</i>” means a person, group of persons, or education service provider that develops and submits an application to the State Board for a charter school.</li> <li>• “<i>Governing board</i>” means the independent board of a charter school whose members are elected or selected</li> </ul>

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
the proposed charter school, if available.	<p>6.3. Enter the names of the proposed governing board members. If not yet known, enter the date when they will be available (Limited to 500 characters).</p> <p>6.4. Upload the CV or résumé for each governing board member. [Upload]</p> <p>6.5. Download, complete, and upload the <a href="#">6.5 table template</a> to indicate the names of the proposed charter school administration and each individual's role.</p> <p>6.6. Upload the CV or résumé for each administrator. [Upload]</p>	pursuant to the charter school contract, subject to the requirements of section 256E.7, subsection 10.
h. The charter school's proposed operations calendar and sample daily schedule.	<p>7. Proposed Calendar and Daily Schedule</p> <p>7.1. Upload a copy of the proposed charter school's calendar that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School year and semester start and end dates,</li> <li>• Holidays and other no school days, and</li> <li>• Professional learning days. [Upload]</li> </ul> <p>7.2. Upload a sample of the proposed charter school's daily schedule for one week that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daily start and end times,</li> <li>• Class period or content block start and end times, and</li> <li>• Name of classes or content to be covered.</li> <li>• If the proposed charter school wishes to offer grades nine</li> </ul>	7.1: A request to waive minimum instructional requirements (1,080 hours or 180 days of instruction) may be made in Section 27.

Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
	through 12, upload a master schedule and course catalog. [Upload]	
<i>i.</i> A description of the academic program and identification of ways the program aligns with state academic standards.	<p>8. Proposed Academic Program</p> <p>8.1. Describe the proposed charter school's academic program and identify how the program aligns with state academic standards (Limited to 9,000 characters; supplemental information can be uploaded in 8.2).</p> <p>8.2. Optional upload to support 8.1.</p>	<p>8.1: Academic and learning standards are clear and rigorous expectations that educators use to ensure that all students are ready for college and/or career and to be productive citizens. Standards provide a set of common expectations for Iowa's schools. These standards include the <a href="#">Iowa Early Learning Standards</a>, <a href="#">Iowa Core Standards</a>, <a href="#">Iowa Core Essential Elements</a>, <a href="#">Iowa English Language Proficiency Standards</a>, career and technical education standards, and recommended standards in the areas of <a href="#">fine arts</a> and <a href="#">computer science</a>. See the <a href="#">Student Standards webpage</a> for more information.</p>
<i>j.</i> A description of the charter school's instructional model, including the type of learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum overview, and teaching methods.	<p>9. Proposed Instructional Model</p> <p>9.1. Describe the proposed charter school's instructional model that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type of learning environment,</li> <li>• Class size and structure,</li> <li>• Curriculum overview, and</li> <li>• Teaching methods (Limited to 9,000 characters; supplemental information can be uploaded in 9.2).</li> </ul> <p>9.2. Optional upload to support 9.1.</p>	<p>9.1: An instructional model is a framework for the proposed instructional design that aligns with the needs of the charter school's prospective student population(s). The description should address all of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning environment is the way instruction will be provided (e.g., face-to-face classroom-based, independent study, online).</li> <li>• Class size and structure includes the maximum class size, the teacher-to-student ratio, grades served in a particular classroom, etc.</li> <li>• Curriculum overview includes how teachers will teach the standards, including the particular curriculum (e.g., lessons, instructional materials, teaching techniques, activities).</li> <li>• Teaching methods include the methods and systems that teachers will use to provide differentiated instruction, remediation, and intervention to meet the needs of all students.</li> </ul>

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
<p>k. The charter school's plan for using internal and external assessments to measure and report student progress on the performance framework in accordance with section 256E.9.</p>	<p>10. Assessment of Student Progress 10.1. Describe how the proposed charter school will use assessments to measure and report student progress on the performance framework (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p>	<p>10.1 should describe how the proposed charter school will administer, analyze, and use assessment results related to the performance framework (see the previous Charter School Contract Performance Framework section).</p>
<p>l. Plans for identifying and serving students with disabilities, students who are limited English proficient, students who are academically failing or below grade level, and gifted students, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations.</p>	<p>11. Proposed Identification and Provision of Student Supports 11.1. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for identifying and serving students with disabilities, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations (Limited to 9,000 characters). 11.2. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for identifying and serving English learners, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations (Limited to 9,000 characters). 11.3. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for identifying and serving gifted and talented students, including but not limited to compliance with applicable laws and regulations (Limited to 9,000 characters). 11.4. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for identifying and serving students who are failing academically or are below grade level, including but not limited to</p>	<p>11.1 should describe the school's service delivery plans and referral process, including related professional development, for students with disabilities.</p> <p>11.2 should summarize the school's Lau plan and use of the English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA).</p> <p>11.3 should summarize the school's gifted and talented plan.</p> <p>11.4 should describe the school's plan for identification and support for students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That do not meet benchmark on screening assessments,</li> <li>• Are not proficient on statewide assessments,</li> <li>• Have failing grades, or</li> <li>• Are chronically absent.</li> </ul>

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
	compliance with applicable laws and regulations (Limited to 9,000 characters).	
<i>m.</i> A description of cocurricular and extracurricular programs and how the programs will be funded and delivered.	12. Proposed Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Programs 12.1. Describe the proposed charter school's co-curricular and extracurricular programs, including how the programs will be funded and delivered (Limited to 9,000 characters).	12.1: Co-curricular and extracurricular programs are not required to be offered.
<i>n.</i> Plans and timelines for student recruitment, enrollment, and transfers, including enrollment preferences and procedures for conducting transparent admissions selections, including admissions lotteries.	13. Proposed Student Recruitment 13.1. Describe the proposed charter school's plan and timeline(s) for recruiting, enrolling, and transferring students, including information about any enrollment preferences and procedures for conducting transparent admissions selections (Limited to 9,000 characters).	13.1 should describe how information related to enrollment and lottery policies will be publicly available and provided to the targeted community(ies).
<i>o.</i> The proposed code of student conduct, including applicable procedures and disciplinary sanctions for both general students and special education students.	14. Proposed Code of Student Conduct 14.1. Describe the charter school's proposed code of student conduct, including procedures and disciplinary sanctions for both general education and special education students (Limited to 9,000 characters).	14.1 should describe the proposed charter school's philosophy of student discipline, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which student actions will result in discipline,</li> <li>• How discipline practices and procedures will be monitored to ensure legal and policy compliance,</li> <li>• The appeal process that the school will employ for students facing expulsion, and</li> <li>• How the school will take into account the rights of students with disabilities in disciplinary actions and proceedings.</li> </ul>

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
<p><i>p.</i> A chart or description of the charter school's organizational structure and the duties and powers of each position or group, including the delineation of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, and any related bodies or external organizations that have a role in managing the charter school.</p>	<p>15. Proposed Organizational Structure</p> <p>15.1. Upload a copy of the proposed charter school's organizational structure. For each position or group in the organizational chart, list the duties and powers. [Upload]</p> <p>15.2. Describe the delineation of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, and any other related bodies or external organizations that play a role in managing the charter school (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p>	<p>15.1 should include the position or group titles and, if available, may list specific names.</p> <p>15.2: The delineation of authority is a matter of local determination, as long as the delineation is clear and unambiguous.</p>
<p><i>q.</i> A staffing chart for the charter school's first year and a staffing plan for the duration of the charter school contract.</p>	<p>16. Proposed Staffing Plan</p> <p>16.1. Upload proposed charter school's staffing chart for the first year of operation. [Upload]</p> <p>16.2. Describe the proposed charter school's staffing plan for the duration of the charter school contract (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p>	<p>16.2 should describe how staffing needs will be analyzed and addressed over the duration of the contract and how compliance with licensure requirements through the Board of Educational Examiners will be achieved.</p>
<p><i>r.</i> Plans for recruiting and developing school administrators, staff, and governing board members and the charter school's employment policies, including performance evaluation plans.</p>	<p>17. Proposed Recruitment and Development of Administration, Staff, and Governing Board</p> <p>17.1. Describe how the proposed charter school will recruit and develop school administrators, staff, and governing board members (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p> <p>17.2. Upload the proposed charter school's employment policies, including performance evaluation plans. [Upload]</p>	<p>17.1 should describe information, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment policies;</li> <li>• How open positions will be advertised in the community(ies);</li> <li>• Ongoing professional learning that will be provided to administrators, staff, and governing board members; and</li> <li>• Plans for mentoring and induction for <a href="#">teachers</a> and <a href="#">administrators</a>.</li> </ul>

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
		17.2 should include hiring policies and a plan or form for <a href="#">educator evaluation</a> and address compliance with applicable state and federal employment policies.
s. Proposed governing bylaws for the charter school.	18. Proposed Governing Bylaws 18.1. Upload the proposed governing bylaws for the proposed charter school. [Upload]	18.1 should include the code or codes of rules adopted for the regulation or management of the affairs of the charter school.
t. Identification and explanation of any partnerships or contractual relationships with an education service provider that are related to the charter school's operations or mission.	19. Partnerships or Contractual Relationships 19.1. Does any independent founding group or proposed governing board member have a partnership or contractual relationship with an education service provider related to the proposed charter school's operations or mission? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes (must upload evidence to 19.1.1)</li> <li>• No (skip to 20.1)</li> </ul> 19.1.1. If yes, state the name(s) of the education service provider(s). For each education service provider listed, explain the partnership or contractual relationship (Limited to 9,000 characters).	19.1: Iowa Code section 256E.2, subsection 4, as amended, defines "education service provider" as "an education management organization, charter school management organization, or other person with whom a charter school contracts for educational program implementation or comprehensive management."
u. The charter school's plans for providing transportation services, food service, and all other operational or ancillary services.	20. Proposed Transportation, Food, Operational, and/or Ancillary Services 20.1. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for providing transportation services (Limited to 9,000 characters).	20.1 should describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bus inspection,</li> <li>• Bus safety,</li> <li>• Driver training,</li> <li>• Planned routes, and</li> <li>• Transportation charges.</li> </ul>

Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
	<p>20.2. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for providing food services (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p> <p>20.3. Describe the proposed charter school's plan for all other operational or ancillary services (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p>	<p>20.2 should describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How the school will provide nutritious lunches to children,</li> <li>• If the school will participate in the <a href="#">National School Lunch Program</a>, and</li> <li>• Its process for <a href="#">income eligibility and verification</a>.</li> </ul> <p>20.3 may describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School facility maintenance,</li> <li>• School business and finance,</li> <li>• Technology, and</li> <li>• Safety and security.</li> </ul>
v. Proposed opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.	<p>21. Proposed Family and School Partnerships</p> <p>21.1. Describe how parents and guardians will be given opportunities to be involved in the proposed charter school (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p>	<p>21.1 may describe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How input and feedback from parents will be requested and used,</li> <li>• How family-school partnerships will be used to strengthen support for learning,</li> <li>• Volunteer activities the school will seek or offer to parents,</li> <li>• How the school will conduct parent-teacher conferences and provide other opportunities for parents to communicate with their child's teacher, and</li> <li>• How the school will communicate with families that do not speak English.</li> </ul>
w. A detailed school start-up plan and five-year plan, including all relevant assumptions used, identifying timelines for charter school finances, budget, and insurance coverage, facility construction, preparation, and contingencies, and the	<p>22. Start-Up and Five-Year Plans</p> <p>22.1. Upload a school start-up plan that includes information, timeline(s), and the individual(s) responsible for each of the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finances;</li> <li>• Budget;</li> <li>• Insurance coverage; and</li> </ul>	<p>22.1 and 22.2 should be distinguished from each other.</p>

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
identification of persons or positions responsible for each such item.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facility construction, preparation, and contingencies. [Upload]</li> </ul> <p>22.2. Upload a five-year plan that includes information, timeline(s), and the individual(s) responsible for each of the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finances;</li> <li>Budget;</li> <li>Insurance coverage; and</li> <li>Facility construction, preparation, and contingencies. [Upload]</li> </ul>	
x. Evidence of anticipated fundraising contributions, if any.	<p>23. Fundraising</p> <p>23.1. Does the proposed charter school have anticipated fundraising contributions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes (must upload evidence to 23.1.1)</li> <li>No (skip to 24.1)</li> </ul> <p>23.1.1. If yes, upload evidence of the contributions. [Upload]</p>	<p>23.1: This includes any fundraising activities or grant activities known to the applicant at the time of the application. Examples might include U.S. Department of Education grants, state grants, or local fundraising efforts.</p>
y. If the application includes a proposal that the governing board contracts with an education service provider, evidence of the education service provider's success in serving student populations similar to that which is proposed in the application and if the education service provider operates other	<p>24. Evidence of Prior Student Success</p> <p>24.1. Will the proposed governing board contract with an education services provider?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yes (continue to 24.2)</li> <li>No (skip to 26.1)</li> </ul> <p>24.2. Upload evidence of the educational service provider's success in serving student populations like those proposed in this application. [Upload]</p>	<p>24.2 may include demonstration of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growth on assessment scores over time for the specific population;</li> <li>Provision of curriculum and instruction matched to the student population being served;</li> <li>Increased student enrollment and attendance for the specific population;</li> <li>Decreased student discipline for the specific population; and</li> <li>Exemplary parent and community involvement for the specific population.</li> </ul>

Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
<p>charter schools, evidence of past performance of such other charter schools and evidence of the education service provider's capacity for growth.</p>	<p>24.3. Has the educational service provider operated other charter schools?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes (must upload evidence to 24.3.1)</li> <li>• No (skip to 25.1)</li> </ul> <p>24.3.1. If yes, upload evidence of a) past performance of other charter schools and b) the founding group's capacity for an additional charter school. [Upload]</p>	<p>24.3: A "No" response does not disqualify the applicant.</p> <p>24.3.1 must include demonstration of the education service provider's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Past performance of other charter schools, which may be demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Growth on assessment scores over time;</li> <li>○ Curriculum, instruction, and assessment matched to the mission of the charter school;</li> <li>○ Increased student enrollment and attendance;</li> <li>○ Decreased student discipline;</li> <li>○ Exemplary parent and community involvement;</li> <li>○ Financial stability; and</li> <li>○ Staff stability.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Capacity for an additional charter school, which may be demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sound budget management;</li> <li>○ Proper allocation of resources;</li> <li>○ Fundraising efforts; and</li> <li>○ Level of commitment and time for the proposed school.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>z. If the application includes a proposal that the governing board contracts with an education service provider, a description of the education service provider's staff performance evaluation measures and compensation structure, methods of contract oversight and dispute resolution,</p>	<p>25. Proposed Staff Performance Evaluation</p> <p>25.1. Describe the proposed educational service provider's staff performance evaluation measures and compensation structure for teachers, administrators, and other staff members (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p> <p>25.2. Describe the proposed educational service provider's methods of contract oversight and dispute</p>	<p>25.1 to 25.3 are only to be answered if the response to 24.1 is "Yes."</p>

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
investment disclosures, and conflicts of interest.	<p>resolution (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p> <p>25.3. Describe the proposed educational service provider's investment disclosures and conflicts of interest (Limited to 9,000 characters).</p>	
<p>aa. A proposed duration and outline of the charter school contract, including designation of roles, authority, and duties of the governing board and the charter school staff.</p>	<p>26. Proposed Charter School Contract with State Board</p> <p>26.1. Upload an outline of the proposed charter school contract with the State Board that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Duration,</li> <li>• Designation of roles,</li> <li>• Authority,</li> <li>• Duties of the governing board, and</li> <li>• Charter school staff. [Upload]</li> </ul>	<p>26.1: The State Board may develop a contract checklist that may be used to draft the proposed contract. Any contract should include a review by legal counsel.</p>
<p>ab. The specific statutes and administrative rules with which the charter school does not intend to comply. The department shall provide technical assistance to the applicant under the charter school contract in order to facilitate the goals of the charter school.</p>	<p>27. Statute and/or Rule Waiver</p> <p>27.1. Does the independent founding group wish to request a waiver of one or more of the following requirements: Iowa Code section 256.7(21) and the educational standards of Iowa Code section 256.11 and/or the minimum requirements for instructional hours or days?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes (continue to 27.2)</li> <li>• No (skip to assurances)</li> </ul> <p>27.2. Select each statute and/or administrative rule with which the charter school does not intend to comply (Check all that apply).</p>	

*Iowa Department of Education guidance should be viewed as advisory unless it's specifically authorized by state statute, according to Iowa Code section 256.9A. This does not apply to administrative rules, declaratory orders, or materials required by federal law or courts.*

Required Criterion (Iowa Code § 256E.5, as amended)	Application Question	Additional Instructions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be subject to and comply with the requirements of Iowa Code section 256.7(21) and the educational standards of Iowa Code section 256.11.</li> <li>• Provide instruction for at least the number of days or hours required by Iowa Code section 279.10(1).</li> </ul> <p>27.3. Describe the technical assistance sought by the independent founding group from the Department concerning statutes and administrative rules that may be waived (Limited to 3,000 characters).</p>	

# Iowa Public Charter School Program Assurances and Conditions

## Assurances

If the independent founding group is unable to assure compliance with any of the following assurances, the application will not be approved. Later discovery of failure to adhere to any of the assurances may be basis for the State Board to rescind approval.

The proposed charter school assures that:

- A. It will meet all applicable federal, state, and local health and safety requirements and laws prohibiting discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, religion, ancestry, or disability.
- B. It will operate as a nonsectarian, nonreligious school.
- C. It will be free of tuition and application fees to Iowa resident students between the ages of five and 21 years.
- D. It will comply with chapters 216 and 216A relating to civil and human rights.
- E. It will provide special education services in accordance with chapter 256B.
- F. It understands that it is subject to the same financial audits, audit procedures, and audit requirements as a school district. The audit must be consistent with the requirements of sections 11.6, 11.14, 11.19, and 279.29, and section 256.9, subsection 20, except to the extent deviations are necessary because of the program at the school. The Department, the auditor of state, or the Legislative Services Agency may conduct financial, program, or compliance audits.
- G. It will comply with the requirements of section 256.7, subsection 21, and the educational standards of section 256.11, unless specifically waived by the State Board during the application process.
- H. It will provide instruction for at least the number of days or hours required by section 279.10, subsection 1, unless specifically waived by the State Board as part of the application process.
- I. It will comply with the requirements of chapter 256E.
- J. Its governing board meetings will be conducted in a manner that is open to the public. The governing board will be a governmental body for purposes of chapter 21 relating to open meetings.
- K. It understands that all records, documents, and electronic data of the charter school and of the governing board—its government body for purposes of chapter 22—will be public records and are subject to the provisions of chapter 22 relating to the examination of public records.
- L. It will employ or contract with teachers as defined in section 272.1, who hold valid licenses with an endorsement for the type of instruction or service for which the teachers are employed or under contract.
- M. It will have a chief administrator that is one of the following:
  - An administrator who holds a valid license under chapter 272,
  - A teacher who holds a valid license under chapter 272, or
  - An individual who holds an authorization to be a charter school administrator issued by the Board of Educational Examiners under chapter 272.<sup>3</sup>
- N. It will not discriminate in its student admissions policies or practices based on intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a person with a disability. However, a charter school may limit admission to students who are within a particular range of ages or grade levels or on any other basis that would be legal if initiated by a school district.
- O. It will give enrollment priority to the siblings of students enrolled in a charter school.
- P. It will enroll an eligible student who submits a timely application unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level, or building. In this case, students must be accepted by lot.
- Q. It will, upon enrollment of an eligible student, notify the public school district of residence not later than March 1 of the school year preceding the year of enrollment.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Board of Educational Examiners must adopt rules for the issuance of such authorizations not later than December 31, 2021, and such authorizations must only be valid for service or employment as a charter school administrator.

- R. It will adopt a conflict-of-interest policy and a code of ethics for all board members and employees.
- S. It will adopt a policy regarding the hiring of family members to avoid nepotism in hiring and supervision. The policy must include but is not limited to a disclosure to the governing board of potential nepotism in hiring and supervision. Any person subject to the policy with a conflict must not be involved in the hiring decision or supervision of a potential employee.
- T. It will prohibit individuals compensated by an education service provider from serving as a voting member on the governing board unless the State Board waives such prohibition.
- U. If operated by an education service provider, it will ensure the governing board of the charter school has access to all records of the education service provider that are necessary to evaluate any provision of the contract or evaluate the education service provider's performance under the contract.
- V. It will have a majority of the membership of the governing board be residents of the geographic area served by the charter school. Each member of the governing board who is not a resident of the geographic area served by the charter school must be a resident of Iowa.
- W. It will post the charter school's annual budget on the charter school's website for public viewing within 10 days of approval of the budget. Each posted budget must continue to be accessible to the public on the website for all subsequent budget years (Iowa Code § 256E.7(2)-(11), as amended by the 2021 Iowa Acts, HF 847).

## Conditions

### REPORTING

To meet the data reporting requirements, including student enrollment and performance information needed for the performance framework, charter schools must use a student information system that will transmit information to the Department that is compliant with the School Interoperability Framework (SIF) education data standard (Iowa Admin. Code r. 281—19.10(3)).

### NON-DISCRIMINATION

Iowa Code section 256E.7, subsection 4, as amended, states that a charter school cannot discriminate in its student admissions policies or practices based on intellectual or athletic ability, measures of achievement or aptitude, or status as a person with a disability. However, a charter school may limit admission to students who are within a particular range of age or grade level or on any other basis that would be legal if initiated by a school district. Enrollment priority must be given to the siblings of students enrolled in a charter school.

## Certification

The following individuals must certify the application before submission:

- Founding group authorized representative,
- Governing board president (if identified in Question 6), and
- Education service provider authorized representative (if identified in Question 24).

## Questions and Additional Guidance

If you have questions, please contact Janet Boyd at [janet.boyd@iowa.gov](mailto:janet.boyd@iowa.gov). For additional charter school guidance and information, please visit the Department's [Charter School webpage](#).